



HISTORY BUZZ

St Bede's College History Department

*The Princes in the Tower Jack the Ripper
Disappearance of Agatha Christie
The Maya Civilisation
Dyatlov Pass Incident Lindbergh Baby*

UNSOLVED MYSTERIES

Inspired · Committed · Grateful

Princes in the Tower

The suspicious disappearance of the two English princes, Edward V, aged twelve, and Richard, aged nine, in 1483 has been intriguing historians for decades.

Could their mysterious disappearance have something to do with their uncle Richard III, or one of the other nobles of the time?

In March 1471, after victories at Barnet and Tewkesbury, Edward IV regained the English crown. Despite a continuing threat from Henry Tudor, the last Lancastrian claiming the throne, Edward IV reigned in relative peace until he died suddenly in April 1483. What followed was one of the greatest mysteries in the history of the English monarchy.

Following Edward IV's death, it was unclear who should be the new King. His sons, Edward and Richard, were too young to take the crown. Eventually, after many months, it was decided that Edward IV's brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester, would become Lord Protector.

As Lord Protector, Richard controlled the decisions and actions of Edward.

Supposedly in preparation for Edward's coronation, he took them to the Tower of London. The boys never left the Tower of London and were never seen again! But what happened to them? What we do know is that Richard III became King...

It is generally assumed by historians that Richard III killed the young princes so he himself would become King, but the only evidence is circumstantial. Other theories speculate that they were killed by their other uncle, the Duke of Buckingham or Henry VII. Yet no one was certain where the corpses lay.



191 years later, workmen at the Tower dug up a wooden box, ten feet below the stairs that led from the Royal Apartments to the White Tower. The box contained two human skeletons believed to be the princes', but this has never been proven.

I, like many historians, believe that the young Princes were murdered by Richard III. He had the ultimate motive; personal gain and securing power. But after all this is a mystery.

Oliver Taylor, L6

Jack the Ripper



For three months in 1888, panic and fear swept the East End of London, caused by one of history's most infamous serial killers, known as Jack the Ripper. Between August and September, Jack the Ripper murdered at least five women- yet the identity of the killer remains unknown.

In Victorian times, the murder of prostitutes was not reported in the press. However, this series of killings stood out because of the violence and brutality. There was huge media interest, as fear consumed London with the failure to catch the killer causing public outcry: forcing the Chief of Police to resign.

The murders all took place in the Whitechapel area of London. The first victim may have been Martha Tabram who was murdered on 6th August or Mary Ann Nicholls who was murdered on 31st August. Almost a month later, on the 30th September, another horrific act took place with Elizabeth-Stride and Catherine Eddoweson being killed within minutes of each other. The final and youngest victim was Mary Jane Kelly; she was killed on 9th November. The murders all shared many similarities, with the victims all prostitutes and all horribly mutilated.

During their investigation, the police received various letters with information about the killings. One of these letters referred to the killer as "Jack the Ripper" and the name has been associated with these terrible crimes ever since.

There are many theories about the identity of the killer. It was thought he was a butcher or doctor due to the violence. Many names were linked to the crimes including Montague Drutt, James Maybrick, and Aaron Kosmicki. In 2007, a shawl found close to one of the victims was tested for DNA and evidence linking Aaron Kosmin. However, that evidence has been criticised, so the identity of Jack the Ripper will continue to remain a mystery.

Will Taylor, L6

Dissapearance of Agatha Christie

Agatha Christie, an English crime novelist, once vanished for eleven days! Fortunately, the police found her.. but what happened during these eleven days? It's a mystery because Agatha Christie suffered from memory loss! In public, there are different versions of what happened to Agatha Christie during the eleven days. In this article, I will show you one of the public versions and what the police had to say. The first version states that: On the 3rd December 1926 at 9.30 am, Agatha Christie woke up from her armchair and took a look at her daughter who was sleeping. Then she hopped in her vehicle and drove off, vanishing from the public eye. The police assigned more than one thousand officers and hundreds of civilians gathered, the police even assigned helicopters.

The car she used was found by the police the following day, but they still couldn't find Agatha herself. A lake nearby, called the Silent Pool, became a thrilling point of the story.

The car she used was found by the police the following day, but they still couldn't find Agatha herself. A lake nearby, called the Silent Pool, became a thrilling point of the story. Because of a few drowning cases, the public thought Agatha Christie drowned herself in the pool, but this theory was opposed because there was no evidence Agatha Christie had drowned. The police could not find her body in the pool and the profit from her six novels was very good: she had no reason to commit suicide. These two main reasons showed that Agatha Christie did not and would not drown herself in the pool. After the police realised that the theory wasn't correct, the whole investigation was unintentionally a great way to promote Christie's six books.

It was not until the 14th December, eleven days after her sudden disappearance, that the police finally found Christie, in a hotel located in Harrogate, safe and well.

The police concluded that Agatha Christie left home and travelled to London, crashing her car en route, then boarded a train to Harrogate. On arriving at the spa town, she checked in with almost no luggage into the Swan Hydro- now the Old Swan Hotel. Bizarrely, she used her husband's mistress surname as hers, calling herself Tressa Neele and claiming she was from South Africa.

There are still hundreds of suggestions on where Agatha Christie went, but there are no final answers. Even Agatha Christie, due to the fact that she suffered from memory loss, could not help. We have no idea what event Agatha Christie experienced when she packed her luggage into the Elysium. The mystery of Agatha Christie's disappearance will leave us to discuss forever and ever.

Bosco Cheung, U5



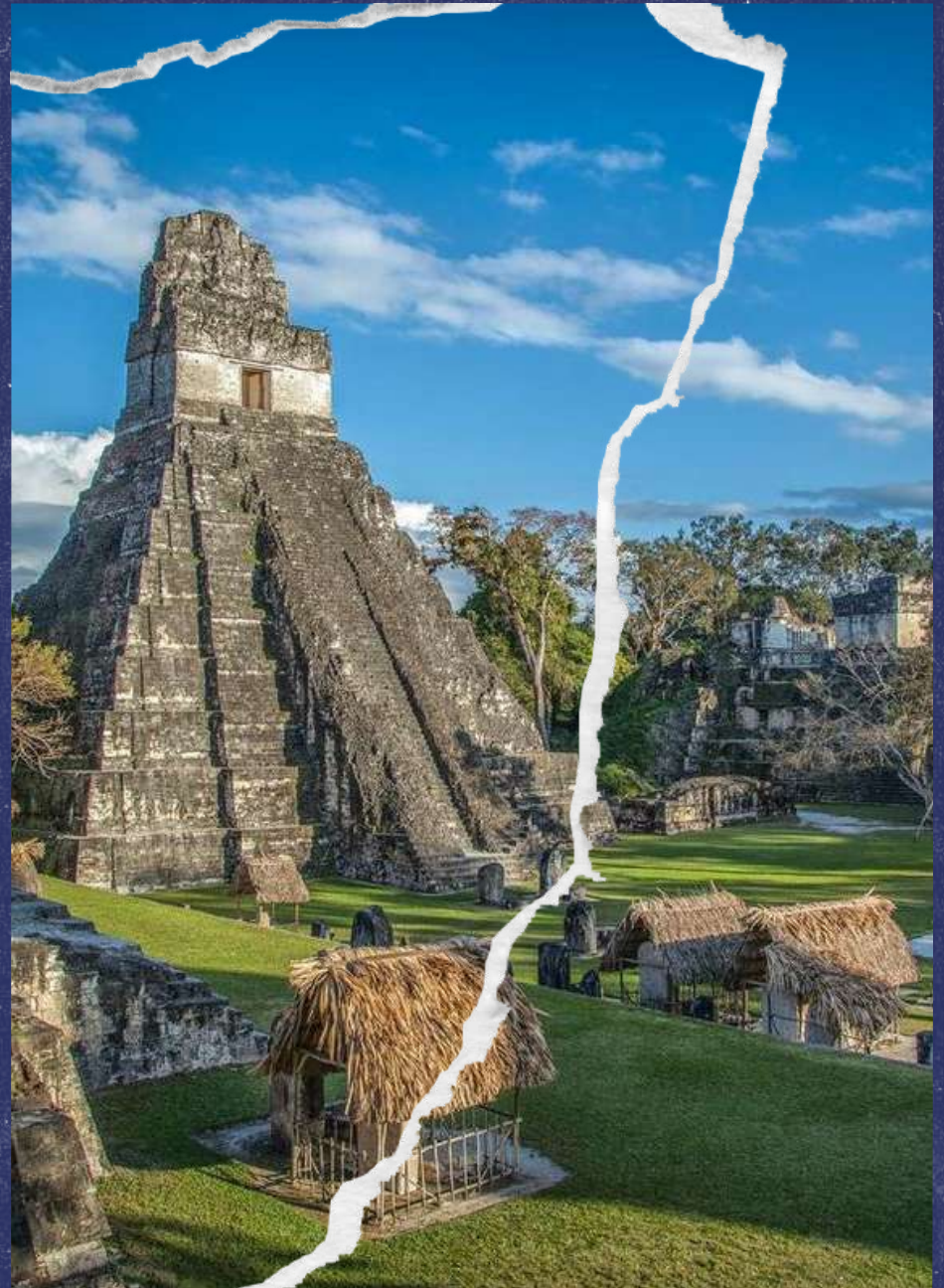
The Mayan Civilisation

Hidden beneath the canopy of the jungles in Southern Mexico and Central America, is the lost world of the ancient Maya. Nearly two million square miles of lush green hides centuries-old cities riddled with mysteries. The ruins of the Maya are filled with strange twisting inscriptions carved on monuments, painted on pottery, and written bark paper books found on the sites. For many years, these inscriptions confounded explorers and archaeologists. What secrets do they hold?

The earliest days of the Maya civilization date back to 600 BC. It is believed that the Maya civilization was born in a region called the Mirador Basin in Guatemala. The heart of their civilization lay between the highlands of Guatemala and the plains of Yucatan, much of which are regions of dense jungle. Around 200 AD, the Maya began building big cities here. Such as Tikal, Copan and Palenque, which were ruled by different kings and queens, but shared common beliefs and traditions.

Over the next thousand years, the Maya civilization became the most advanced in the Americas: they were renowned for their monumental architecture, building soaring pyramids and temples, plazas and ball courts whose ruins can still be seen today. The Mayas mastered mathematics and astronomy (they invented the concept of 'zero!'); their writing system - hieroglyphs, was the first written language of the western hemisphere and they had also produced stunning works of art such as those engraved on the stone pillars and walls in the ruins. Maya civilization thrived for two thousand years with its sophisticated culture. These cities reached glorious heights, some supporting hundreds of thousands of people, as Europe was entering its dark ages.

During the 9th century AD, scientists believed that the Maya suffered a major collapse, which is thought to have been caused by war and famine. People abandoned their cities and fled north. Although the population reduced, this was not enough to wipe out the Maya as a significant presence remained. It was not until the Spanish invasion in the 16th century that the Maya civilization was decimated. Diego de Landra, a Spanish friar, was determined to destroy Maya hieroglyphs. His mission was to convert the Maya to Catholicism and he saw the writing of the Maya as tools of the devil.



Learning that the people were still worshipping ancient gods, he arrested and tortured thousands of Maya. He burned hundreds and thousands of books written in hieroglyphs; only four books survived.

Maya scribes were also forced to learn European script. Hieroglyphs died out in the centuries that followed the Spanish conquest, people were burnt at the stake for writing in the old system and by the in the 18th-century, nobody could read or write hieroglyphs. Maya script has now vanished and books have perished. All we are left with to comprehend who the ancient Maya were, are mysterious written words carved in stone which we cannot make sense of: for centuries scholars have struggled to understand them. This begs the question- will we ever be able to crack the Maya code? The secret of this monumental civilization which lies behind these inscriptions is surely one of the greatest mysteries on earth which we are yet

Lucia Lu, U6

The Dyatlov Pass



On the night of 1st February 1959, nine ski-hikers (an experienced trekking group from the Ural Polytechnical Institute, led by Igor Dyatlov) had established a camp on the eastern slopes of Kholat Syakhl in what is now Russia. However, they never returned to their camp and vanished mysteriously in the mountains.

On 26th February, searchers found the hikers' abandoned tent, which had been ripped open from the inside. Surrounding the area were footprints left by the group, some wearing socks, some wearing a single shoe, some barefoot, all of which continued to the edge of a nearby wood. There the first two bodies were found, shoeless and wearing only underwear. The scene suggested death by hypothermia, but as medical examiners studied the bodies, as well as the other seven that were discovered over the months that followed, hypothermia no longer made sense. One body had evidence of a blunt force trauma consistent with a brutal assault; another had third-degree burns; one had been vomiting blood; one was missing a tongue, and some of their clothing was found to be radioactive.

Theories floated include KGB interference, drug overdose, UFO, gravity anomalies, and the Russian version of the Yeti. Recently, a documentary filmmaker presented a theory involving a terrifying but real phenomenon called "infrasound," in which the wind interacts with the topography to create a barely audible hum that can nevertheless induce powerful feelings of nausea, panic, dread, chills, nervousness, raised heartbeat rate, and breathing difficulties. The only consensus remains that whatever happened involved an overwhelming and possibly "inhuman force."

On 11 July 2020, Andrey Kuryakov, deputy head of the Urals Federal District directorate of the Prosecutor-General's Office, announced an avalanche to be the "official cause of death" for the Dyatlov group in 1959. Later independent computer simulations and analyses by Swiss researchers also suggest avalanche as the cause.

However, there is much evidence to contradict the avalanche theory- the location of the incident did not have any obvious signs of an avalanche having taken place and the bodies found within a month of the event were covered with a very shallow layer of snow. Furthermore, over 100 expeditions to the region had been held since the incident, and none of them ever reported conditions that might create an avalanche. A study of the area using up-to-date terrain-related physics revealed that the location was entirely unlikely for such an avalanche to have occurred. An analysis of the terrain and the slope showed that even if there could have been a very specific avalanche that found its way into the area, its path would have gone past the tent- but the tent had collapsed from the side, not in a horizontal direction.

In addition, Dyatlov was an experienced skier and the much older Zolotaryov was studying for his Master's Certificate in ski instruction and mountain hiking. Neither of these two men would have been likely to camp anywhere in the path of a potential avalanche. Finally, footprint patterns leading away from the tent were inconsistent with someone, let alone a group of nine people, running in panic from either real or imagined danger. All the footprints leading away from the tent and towards the woods were consistent with individuals who were walking at a normal pace.

Charlotte Corbett, U6

Lindbergh Baby

An all-American hero. A baby snatched from his crib. A suicide. A con man. The mafia and the perfect alibi. No wonder this culminated in 'the trial of the century'. A story so gripping that it eclipsed the beginning of Nazi tyranny; drawing America's attention to a small town in the middle of New Jersey.



On the 1st March 1932, there was a sharp noise outside the Lindbergh weekend residents. A window had been cracked open, a ransom note of \$50,000 left on the radiator and the twenty-month-old Charles Lindbergh Jr. abducted. The crime scene had been wiped of all prints and somehow the kidnapper knew where the child's room was and that the family did not depart that Sunday evening.

The boy's father, Charles Lindbergh, had been one of the most famous men on the planet: he was the first man to voyage across the Atlantic in a single flight. Therefore the case created a media frenzy, leading to two distinct suspects. The maid and the butler. The only two members of staff who knew where the

child would be that night had the world watching them. But a year later they would both be dead. The maid had drunk cyanide and the butler had fallen victim to peritonitis.

The family soon became helpless, so were forced to negotiate with the kidnappers. Charles used his connections to seek help from mobsters, with Al Capone even reaching out. Fortunately, a date was set. The child would be traded on the 1st of April on a boat off the coast of Massachusetts. But on the fateful day, the boat was nowhere to be found. The only evidence the family had of the child being alive was a onesie.

By chance, the baby turned up in a forest a few miles away from the home...

The child's head was smashed in and the post-mortem concluded that the baby had died the day it was taken.

Soon the ransom money began to pop up across New York without a single trace. Until Bruno Hauptmann- a German carpenter- was found spending a few notes. Miraculously, the rest of the ransom money was discovered in his home along with the same piece of wood used to create the escape ladder. However, something still didn't seem right.

His family man persona did not match the description of a child murderer. Footprints at the crime scene and calls with the kidnappers suggested there were multiple convicts, but he had all the money. His boss concurred that he was at work on the day of the crime. None of the graphology seemed to line up. The ladder found was proven to have been tampered with and his business partner- a prolific conman with mafia connections- could have easily set him up.

Yet, a trial- which proved to be a mockery of American justice- led to Hauptmann meeting a fatal end. Hauptmann's lawyer was so enthralled by the presence of his idol, Charles Lindenberg, that he did not defend his client and the prosecution was able to use the testimonies of both a blind man and a compulsive liar to prove their point. So on the night of the 3rd April 1936, two thousand volts coursed through Hauptmann as the whole of America watched.

Despite the fact that no one will ever know what happened to Charles Jr it is clear that the Lindbergh baby will always remain one of the most enticing mysteries never to be solved!

Aaron Ankrah, U6

HISTORY QUIZ

1. Who was the father of Edward V?
Edward IV
George I
Henry VI

2. What was the average number of people living in a house in Whitechapel in 1888?
12
4.9
7.5

3. Who is the best selling author of all time?
William Shakespeare
JK Rowling
Agatha Christie

4. What was the largest Empire in history?
Mongol empire
British empire
Quing empire

5. What year was radioactivity discovered?
1896
1797
1876

6. Who was the first person to circumnavigate the world?
Francis Drake
Ferdinand Magellan
Amelia Earheart

7. How many witches were burned in England between 1447-1779?
567
1583
0

8. How many grandchildren did Queen Victoria have?
24
42
12

9. What animal attacked Napoleon Bonaparte 1807?
Tigers
Bunnies
Rats

10. What year was St Bede's founded?
1798
1834
1876



ANSWERS

- 1) Edward IV
- 2) 7.5
- 3) Agatha Christie
- 4) British empire
- 5) 1896
- 6) Ferdinand Mage
- 7) 0- they were hanged. See Mr Power for more information regarding witches.
- 8) 42
- 9) Bunnies
- 10) 1876

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